

School City of East Chicago
Official Policy Governing Public Participation and Comment
During Meetings of the Board of Trustees

SCEC recognizes the value and importance of public input from community members. For that reason, and in compliance with federal regulations and state statutes, SCEC hereby establishes an Official Policy Governing Public Participation and Comment During Meetings of the Board of Trustees, with corresponding procedural guidelines, to allow members of the general public to effectively and efficiently inform the Board with regard to substantial issues impacting the school district and/or the SCEC student population. The policies and procedures described herein are designed in accordance with the intention of the Board to permit fair and orderly public participation at its public meetings.

Public comment, generally, is not designed or intended to address personal grievances or provide a remedy to individuals in dispute with SCEC. All comments made during the public comment or public participation segment of any public meeting are subject to the following rules and procedures under which public participation is permitted and governed. The SCEC Board Chair or Presiding Officer shall be responsible for administration of this Policy, in accordance with the following provisions:

- A. Any member of the public having a legitimate interest in the actions of the Board may participate during the public portion of any SCEC public hearing, forum, or meeting. Individuals must register on the public comment sign-up sheet available before the start of the hearing, forum, or meeting, and must provide their name and physical address in order to be allowed to participate.
- B. Participants must be recognized by the Chair or Presiding Officer before providing comments, and must preface their comments by the announcement of their name and address.
- C. Comments made by public participants at any SCEC public hearing, forum, or meeting shall be limited to three (3) minutes in duration. Unused comment time may not be transferred or relinquished by one individual to another.
- D. All comments shall be directed to the Board as a whole; no individual shall address or question any Board member or staff member individually.
- E. Public comment is not intended to be an interactive dialogue between an individual and the Board. Neither the Board as a whole, nor any single Board or staff member, shall be required to provide any answer or response to any comment by any individual.
- F. Disruptive discussions between an individual offering public comment and members of the audience at any SCEC public hearing, forum, or meeting are not permitted and may

result in the revocation of the individual's permission to continue with his or her comment.

- G. Individuals providing public comment shall at all times be courteous and respectful in their language, presentation, and behavior, exhibiting a high level of professionalism and integrity. Use of language intended to humiliate, disgrace, demean or mock SCEC or its members or staff and will not be tolerated, and may result in the revocation of the individual's permission to continue with his or her comment.
- H. Following the completion of an individual's public comments at any SCEC public hearing, forum, or meeting, the individual is expected to return to his or her seat with no further debate, dialogue, or comment from the individual or the Board.
- I. At any SCEC public hearing, forum, or meeting, the SCEC Board Chair or Presiding Officer may interrupt or terminate a person's comments, warn an individual of potential consequences, request an individual to leave, request the assistance of security or law enforcement officers, or call for a recess or an adjournment of the hearing, forum, or meeting when, at any time, the individual's comment:
 - i. exceeds the three (3)-minute time limit set forth in Paragraph (C) of this Policy,
 - ii. is personally directed at an individual,
 - iii. is abusive, obscene, or irrelevant, or
 - iv. disregards any part of this policy/procedure.
- J. Video recordings are permitted during Board meetings; however, the individual owning and/or operating the recorder must comply with the following conditions:
 - i. no obstructions may be created between the Board and the audience as a result of the recording;
 - ii. no interviews of any person may be conducted during the Board meeting;
 - iii. no commentary may be made during the meeting or recording that could distract the Board or members of the audience; and
 - iv. no editing or revisions may be performed on the recording which has the effect of changing the context of the recording or altering its nature.
- K. Violation of any part of this policy during any SCEC public hearing, forum, or meeting may result in the enforcement of the following disciplinary policy by the SCEC Chair or Presiding Officer, in addition to the revocation of the individual's permission to comment during that particular meeting:
 - i. 1st violation – Verbal warning
 - ii. 2nd violation - Written Warning
 - iii. 3rd violation – One (1)-month suspension of SCEC public comment privilege
 - iv. 4th violation – Six (6)-month suspension of SCEC public comment privilege
 - v. 5th violation – Once (1)-year suspension of SCEC public comment privilege
 - vi. 6th violation – Five (5) year suspension of SCEC public comment privilege
 - vii. 7th violation – Lifetime ban of SCEC public comment privilege

All violations will be documented in writing for SCEC records and files, and a written copy of the warning will be provided to the individual following receipt of said warning. Violations shall accrue and remain valid for a period of four (4) years from the date of the most recent violation.